

# A LAY.

JEFF JOSELYN.

The happy nightingale  
Doth bid him still away,  
And charms sweet mortal's ear  
With his sweet little lay.

Also, the barn-yard hen  
Doth nest an egg each day,  
And charms some mortal's taste  
With her sweet little "lay."

# ONLY.

EARL MARBLE.

Only a tiny puffer,  
That comes half over the stair,  
Like the nervous tread of a rat,  
Who thinks the rodent is there.

Only a little shiver  
Creeping up down my spine,  
Like the air from death's dark river  
Which comes with a ghastly sign.

Only a basin of water  
Coming down as I open my door,  
And I wish the boys where 'tis hotter  
As I hear their vanishing roar.

# POSTOFFICE.

B. F. SLITZER.

Within this town at break of day,  
A column, through the morning gray,  
Was rushing up and down the street,  
And in his hand a written sheet—

His legs not long but rather thick,  
And still his step was wondrous quick;  
He grasped his hand so free, so mild,  
And ever on his feature smiled—

He labored hard the page to fill  
With "Tom" and "Jim" and "Jack" and "Jill,"  
But on the top was written plain  
"Fidelity," and the other name—

By noon 'twas signed by many score;  
Then fondly did he look it over,  
And as he rushed from door to door,  
He shouted louder than before—

He walked long after set of sun,  
Nor then his labor half was done;  
And as he wended home his way,  
Nor scarce three steps but he would say—

Although 'twas getting dreadful late,  
His dear wife met him at the gate,  
And as he kissed away a tear  
He hiccupped blandly in her ear—

But on the next succeeding day  
The very devil was to pay,  
And now petitions by the score  
Were "merely this and nothing more"—

Say, Cleveland, say! what shall be done,  
When these petitions by the ton  
Are rolling into Washington,  
All headed—each and every one—

TEXARKANA, TEXAS.

# The Nigger Bend Tragedy.

BY MORRIS BEDWING.

"Sam Blakely is killed!"  
A dozen men who were seated about  
the logging shanty smoking or playing  
cards started and looked about at this  
sudden announcement.

Shorty, the skidder, stood just within  
the room swinging a smoke-begrimmed  
lantern and looking straight ahead at the  
group of loggers gathered about a greasy  
pine table with a sputtering tallow can-  
dle in the center. The game of euchre  
came to a sudden halt. Jim Sweezy  
turned half round on his stool and grin-  
ned at Ned Oakley, or Shorty, and growled:

"Boeh! What you givin' us now,  
Shorty?"

"Rats!" and a general laugh followed.  
But the stumpy skidder knew what he  
was talking about, and was not to be put  
down by unseemly levity. He advanced  
to the center of the room, and then sev-  
eral of the loggers could see that his  
bronzed face was pale, and that a scared  
look filled his eyes. Shorty was not  
easily overcome. Something of an un-  
usual nature must have happened, and  
no mistake.

Jim Sweezy crushed his cards down  
upon the table and wheeled squarely  
about as Shorty said:

"It's God's truth, boys, Sam's dead for  
I saw him under a tree-top not five min-  
utes ago."

"Durn cur'us seems to me," muttered  
Jim Sweezy. "The feller started this  
mornin' to go down to Nigger Bend, and  
I don't see how he got back an' planked  
himself under a tree. You ain't comin'  
no cod now, Shorty. Ef you be, I'll  
smash every bone in yer body soon's I  
find it out."

"I tell you 'twas God's truth."

"Boys, Shorty ain't lyin' now. He's  
seen somethin' on'yhow. Let's go out  
and 'vestigate," cried a huge, red-bearded  
teamster, who had until now sat with  
his back leaned against the log ribs of  
the shanty, smoking a briarwood pipe.  
He knocked the pipe out quickly, and  
then thrust the hot briarwood into a side  
pocket of his woinus.

"Bob Stiles is right; we'll 'vestigate."

There was a general commotion now,  
and soon nearly every man in the shanty,  
including many who had crawled into  
their bunks before Shorty's coming,  
poured into the crisp outer air, and fol-  
lowed the flame of the skidder's lantern  
to a tree-top about forty rods away.

When the skidder came to a halt he  
had his lantern high, thus permitting  
every man to see the dark object that  
lay upon the ground just under a pro-  
jecting limb of the giant pine.

"It's Sam Blakely sure enough!" cried  
Tom Holcomb, the scaler. "He must  
have come back through the woods, and  
got under this tree just as it fell. Poor  
fellow."

A feeling of awe came over that group  
of rough loggers, and for a time they  
spoke in subdued tones, and moved  
about with solemn tread, as though fear-  
ful of disturbing the rest of their dead  
comrade. Poor Blakely's skull was  
crushed in, but he was not disfigured  
otherwise. Sam was quite a gentleman  
among the loggers. He was fairly edu-  
cated, and withal a keen business sort  
of a young fellow.

On a following day the body of the  
young logger was conveyed to Nigger  
Bend and consigned to earth. The  
shanty crew attended in a body. May  
Andrews and her mother were the only  
mourners. May and her mother, the  
latter a widow, were employed to do the  
cooking. Mrs. Andrews' brother doing  
the chores about the shanty. Sam  
Blakely was May's cousin, and he was  
often at the cooks' shanty in conse-  
quence.

One other had frequently been at the  
women's shanty—Tom Holcomb, the  
scaler. Which one was the girl's favor-  
ite none could tell. May seemed deeply  
moved at the untimely taking off of her  
cousin, and her eyes were red with  
weeping for some days thereafter.

It was learned that Sam Blakely had  
been to Nigger Bend on the day in ques-  
tion, and had set out to return to the  
shanty just before dark on that fatal day.

No one saw him after he left the Bend  
until Shorty's discovery of his body un-  
der the pine top. The tree had been  
felled just at dark, and the choppers had  
left it, expecting to top and measure the  
same the first thing in the morning. It  
was a wonder with many how Blakely  
came to be in the spot where the tree  
struck him down. Certainly it was not  
on his road home, and he had not been  
to either of the shanties, since the women  
or the chore boy would have seen him.

There was something mysterious about  
the affair, but the sad event was soon  
forgotten and camp life in the woods  
went on in its old, jolly, careless fashion.

Snow soon came and the teams were  
busy for several weeks hauling the logs  
to the river. When the final break came  
several millions of pine logs were heaped  
against the high railway above the rolled  
waters of the Muskegon, and one more  
act in the forest drama must be perform-  
ed ere the logs were adrift in the stream.  
The shanties were deserted for the sea-  
son. Black, glistening trails wound  
their way through the woods where once  
were the smooth roads over which huge  
pyramids of pine had been hauled dur-  
ing the cold months just passed.

April sunshine rapidly dissipated the  
ice and snow, and the rolled Muskegon  
flowed on unvexed to the lake.

A wedding at Nigger Bend was not an  
everyday occurrence, and when one was  
announced, the boys were on the qui-  
vive at once. Visions of a "horning bee"  
and plenty of liquor filled the brains of  
the woodmen. For once, however, a  
part of the programme was destined not  
to take place. Tom Holcomb did not  
propose to submit to a "shivaree," so he  
publicly invited Nigger Bend to come to  
the wedding and dance if they chose at  
his expense.

Since the young scaler was so liberal  
no one thought of troubling him to fur-  
nish refreshments of a liquid nature.  
Tom, however, understood what would  
best suit the denizens of Nigger Bend,  
and so he had a keg of beer on tap the  
evening of the wedding and dance.

The marriage was performed by old  
Squire Hawke, and May Andrews was  
made Mrs. Tom Holcomb in short order.  
After the ceremony the fun commenced.  
People may talk and write about an Old  
Virginia break down, but for genuine,  
boisterous jollity nothing can equal these  
backwoods "shin digs," so popular  
among the loggers and lumbermen a few  
years ago.

Of all the "digs" ever held in Nigger  
Bend the one given by Tom Holcomb  
the night he became a Benedict was ne-  
plus ultra.

Tom himself felt his oats, and danced  
and drank with the merriest of them.  
That wedding was one long remembered  
in Nigger Bend, so soon was it followed  
by a tragedy that sent a shudder to all  
hearts. So boisterous did the newly  
wedded scaler become that more than  
once the pretty bride remonstrated with  
him.

"Don't worry, May," returned Tom,  
with his merry laugh. "I mean to lead  
a sober, industrious life after to-night.  
This is the last fun I will have with the  
boys, you know; let me improve it,  
there's a dear."

May good-naturedly yielded, and the  
consequence was the dance continued  
until the gray streaks of dawn were seen  
in the East. With the stereotyped "I  
wish you much joy" the woodmen de-  
parted, leaving Tom Holcomb alone with  
his bride and Mrs. Andrews, for he re-  
membered the party came off at the  
widow's house.

"I must leave you here for the present,  
May," said Tom. "I contracted with the  
Wards to break their big rollway, and  
as the men will be on this morning, I  
must go at once to the rollway. I will be  
back to-night to supper."

Kissing his new-made wife, Tom Hol-  
comb hurried from the house. Was May  
Holcomb happy? Those who saw her  
the night of the party believed that she  
was. Nevertheless, she was not wholly  
free from haunting thoughts, for the  
man who had met with death in the  
Autumn under a falling tree had held  
her plighted troth, and but for that  
tragedy May would never have become  
the wife of the scaler. When Sam Blake-  
ly left the woods to go to Nigger Bend  
he was a happy man, for his pretty  
cousin had promised to become his wife  
some day. Sam was overjoyed, since he  
had all along recognized in the hand-  
some Tom Holcomb a formidable rival.  
Sam had been six months dead, and May  
was now the wife of his handsome rival.  
So goes the world, in wilderness, country,  
or city, and so it will doubtless go on for-  
ever.

Night shadows were drooping.  
Ten thousand frogs were singing  
enough to split their throats along the  
brush-lined shores of the Muskegon, and  
brooding of the same family were tuning  
up in the water-holes at the base of  
Nigger Bend, when May Holcomb, in  
robe of spotless white, walked out to the  
rude gate in front of the widow's house  
and looked anxiously up the road.

Tom promised to be home to supper,  
and it was past the usual supper hour  
now, and he had not yet put in an ap-  
pearance. It was the first evening of  
her wedded life, and the bride was  
anxious for the coming of her husband.  
Long she stood watching different forms  
as they came and went down the one  
straggling street.

"There was a big break up to the roll-  
way an hour ago," said a man to his com-  
panion as the twin passed the anxious  
watcher at the gate.

"That's Tom Holcomb's rollway?"

"Yes. It's one of the worst places out.  
He don't get enough for the work. It's  
a mighty dangerous place, too."

The men passed out of hearing, and  
still May lingered. The shadows deep-  
ened into intense darkness. May was  
on the point of turning, when a light  
gleamed through the gloom far up the  
wagon road.

Tom was coming at last. She waited  
expectantly until the light drew near,  
and passed in front of the gate. It was  
not Tom, but a short, thickset man who  
held the smoke begrimed lantern in  
front of him as he came to a pause. May  
recognized him at once. "Shorty, you  
have come from the big rollway?" she  
quickly questioned.

"Yes, Mrs. Tom."

"My husband? Why did he not  
come? Surely he can do nothing on the  
rollway after night?"

"No-o-o," faltered the man. "You see,  
miss, er—he won't come because he  
can't."

"Shorty, what do you mean?"

"I mean, marm, that there's been an  
accident, and your man's hurt."

"Hurt! Oh, Tom! I must go to him  
at once," exclaimed May, pushing open  
the gate and passing into the road. A  
distant hand was pressed against her  
arm, and a husky voice said:

"No use, marm. Tom Holcomb's  
killed."

An articulate cry answered the terrible  
announcement of the skidder, and the  
next moment he held a white robed  
form in his arms, silent in a dead faint.

A big break had occurred on the roll-  
way and Tom Holcomb had been caught  
in an exposed position. A mass of logs  
went over him, and when the rush had  
ceased, a mangled mass of flesh and bone,  
sickening to behold was lifted from the  
hillside and borne to a leaf-strewn mound  
on the summit of the bluff. Was the  
scaler dead?

No, he still breathed, but it was evi-  
dent that life was fluttering but faintly  
in the mangled form.

"Oh, my God!"

Thus groaned the blood smeared lips  
in husky accents. Jim Sweezy knelt  
quickly beside the poor fellow, and bent  
his shaggy head low.

"Ef you've got a word to say better  
speak, Tom. Mebbe your woman—"

"Don't I love her; that's why I did it."

"I'm going to die, Jim."

"I expect you be. No doctor kin help  
you now, Tom—"

A deep and awful groan interrupted  
Sweezy.

"In great pain, Tom? Heaven help  
you, old boy." Then Sweezy gazed away  
to avoid the anguished sight.

"I—I'm not in such bodily pain," ar-  
ticulated the purple lips, "but, Jim, I ain't  
fit to die."

"None of us is, I reckon," uttered Jim  
Sweezy, still looking into the gathering  
shadows along the edge of the forest.

"I'm worse than any of you. Bend  
down low, lower, Jim," grasped the  
dying man, in husky accents. The stout  
woodman obeyed and bent his ear close  
to the purple lips of the fast sinking  
man.

A dozen men stout, red-shirted fellows  
stood round the two forms on the ground,  
awed into silence at what they beheld.  
Not one of those men heard the words  
uttered in husky accents by the debona-  
ir young scaler, words that sent a chill  
to the heart of Jim Sweezy, an astounded  
look to his face. This was the com-  
munication that reached his ear, uttered  
in a voice below a whisper:

"I—I killed Sam Blakely, Jim! I did  
it with a club, and put his body under  
the tree to ward off suspicion. It was for  
her, for May, that I become a murderer!"

A gasp came at the last, followed by a  
rattle in the throat. An instant later,  
when Jim Sweezy rose to his feet and  
turned from the spot with white face,  
Tom Holcomb was dead. No one in that  
crew ever learned the truth and the  
scaler received an honored burial, with  
many sincere mourners following his  
corpse to the grave.

It was not until ten years later, when  
May had been six years married to John  
Norman, that the author learned from  
Jim Sweezy's lips the story of the tragedy  
among the pines.

"You must keep the secret, Redwing,  
for May never expected the truth," said  
Jim, and I do not reveal it when I tell  
the story, guarding the real characters  
under fictitious names.

# STOCK CONVENTION.

Regular Fourth Semi-Annual Meeting of  
the Cherokee Strip Live Stock Associa-  
tion.

Caldwell, Kan., March 25.—The regu-  
lar fourth semi-annual meeting of the  
Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association  
was held in this city yesterday in the  
old Opera House Hall. The attendance  
was not large, but such gentlemen as  
were here meant business, and proceed-  
ed to transact it at once. The meeting  
was called to order by President Miller  
at 10:10 a. m. He then delivered a short  
address, congratulating the stockmen  
and members of the association upon  
their good fortune in not having lost all  
their cattle during the past winter. He  
spoke at length concerning the in-  
vestigation of the lease by the Senate  
Committee during the winter, and stated  
that the Board of Directors had en-  
deavored to discharge their duty to the  
association in the matter, and place the  
matter of the lease fairly and truthfully  
before that committee; that a sub-com-  
mittee from the same body will visit this  
country during the coming summer for  
the same purpose; that they were called  
to order by the old board of nine di-  
rectors which was re-elected.

A communication from the Executive  
Committee of the Cheyenne & Arapahoe  
Cattle Company was read, asking a com-  
mittee to meet them in St. Louis on April  
1, to consult concerning the passage of  
Texas cattle through the Indian Terri-  
tory.

Hon. Eli Titus, Major Modewell, and  
Major Gregory were named as the com-  
mittee.

The report of H. R. Johnson, Inspector  
at Kansas City, was received and read. It  
showed that he had captured 157 head  
of strays during the year that sold at an  
average of \$34.50 or a total of \$5,411.

Major Cline, agent for the Southern  
Kansas road, stated that his road had  
informed the Southern cattlemen that  
coast cattle would not be carried over  
that road. That his road had not made  
any contract to carry coast cattle, and  
would not do it. He was very emphatic  
about the matter, and though no extreme  
Southern cattle would be offered at this  
point or Hunnewell for shipment, the  
following resolution was adopted and a  
request made that it be given to the  
Associated Press:

Resolved, That it is the sense of the  
Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association,  
in convention assembled, that no objec-  
tion should be made to the driving of  
Texas cattle over the established trail to  
Caldwell and Hunnewell, Kan., pro-  
vided that they are confined strictly to  
the trail.

No general roundup will be held this  
Spring by the Association, the neighbor-  
hood roundup taking its place. There  
being no further business before the  
convention, it adjourned sine die.

The Board of Directors met in the af-  
ternoon and selected the old officers for  
the ensuing year.

The Oklahoma muddle was not men-  
tioned during the meeting. This Asso-  
ciation claims no part of Oklahoma, and  
is, therefore, not interested in the mat-  
ter, their interest being exclusively in  
the Cherokee Strip.

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blade, Fullness after eating, with a dis-  
inclination to exertion of body or mind,  
Irritability of temper, Low spirits, with  
a feeling of having neglected some duty,  
Weariness, Dizziness, Fluttering at the  
Heart, Dots before the eyes, Headache  
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